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C L Y D E S I D E
ACTION ON ASBESTOS

[Branches in Aberdeen, Edinburgh
Greenock, Hull and London.]

Dear Friend,

The above named body consists of volunteers who are themselves victims of the lethal industrial disease, 'asbestosis'. It is our conviction that victims of asbestosis fail to receive social justice. We wish to highlight certain features of our struggle both to the British Medical Association and to other individuals, and groups, in a position to alleviate our plight. By the implementation of our recommendations we believe strongly that the suffering endured by victims of asbestosis and their families would be eased significantly.

It should be compulsory that every worker in asbestos-related employment receives an 'A.C.T. Scan'. This is the only 'proof' truly acceptable to the Department of Social Security when adjudicating on whether or not a claimant should be granted disability benefit on grounds of asbestos-related disease. At present the D.S.S. Adjudication Officer has the authority to overrule - and often does - the opinions of SEVEN members of the medical profession, notwithstanding that the Adjudication Officer has no medical experience whatsoever. Mining workers have their own medical procedure which includes access to the A.C.T. Scan: why should the same treatment not be allowed those employed in asbestos-related industry? In terms of social justice there is no distinction between sillicosis and asbestosis *or mesothelioma.*

It should also be compulsory that Scottish victims who have died receive a Post-Mortem examination. This is current practice in England and Wales and speeds up the complex legal procedure surrounding compensation-claims by families of the deceased.

We further advocate that claims by victims should be assessed by a body of men and women holding direct knowledge or, preferably, experience in asbestos-related industry. Only then can the plight of the victims and their families truly be appreciated. At present the highest authority in Scotland is the Secretary of State. It is an unfortunate irony that the person currently in office, Ian Lang, as an ex-'Name' at Lloyds, still stands to lose financially if the numerous claims now in process are settled in favour of the victims.

Recognition of the severe financial burden placed on these families is long overdue. Society must face up to the fact that

the majority are forced into poverty through no fault of their own, but by virtue of having been employed in a particular industry for most of their working lives. Nothing can compensate for the domestic tragedy. There is no known cure for this debilitating, often fatal, disease. But in a humane society the least that should occur is the genuine attempt to ease the economic hardship facing the victims and their families.

Meanwhile we await the outcome of the Scottish Law Commission's deliberations on whether or not we should achieve 'parity' with the rest of the United Kingdom. We would go further, we believe that victims of asbestosis or mesothelioma should have their plight recognised internationally, that victims throughout Europe and elsewhere be treated on a basis of equality. Presently in this country there is no trained medical staff, no specialist hospitals. Throughout the length and breadth of the United Kingdom we do not have one solitary hospice where victims and their families can convalesce and receive proper counselling. This is nothing short of a national disgrace.

We, the volunteer workers of **Clydeside Action on Asbestos**, call upon the British Medical Association, the Trades Union Congress and all other sympathetic individuals, groups and bodies, to support our recommendations and bring pressure to bear on behalf of the victims of asbestos-related disease. Although our office is the acknowledged expert in this field we receive no state-funding; as a charity we must struggle daily for economic survival. We need YOUR help.

Yours sincerely,

Bert Connors
(Chairperson)

For further information please contact:

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